

Spammers, senders of unsolicited email, are single-handedly responsible for dragging email into the gutter. If you are new to the Internet you may not see what the fuss is about but it doesn't take long for any mailbox to swell to bursting point. Worse, from many people's point of view, is the total lack of targeting. Spammers buy their addresses in bulk, paying no attention to who might be receiving them. Kids are sent links to hardcore pornography sites with subject headings intended to lure them in ("Hello?", "Why don't you call?" and "I REPORTED YOU TO AOL!" being the three most recent in one of our spamtrap inboxes.) People over here are mailed offers aimed at an American audience, that they couldn't take advantage of even if they wanted to do; and every day brings more, selling the same products from the same people, with no way of unsubscribing yourself from most of the lists.

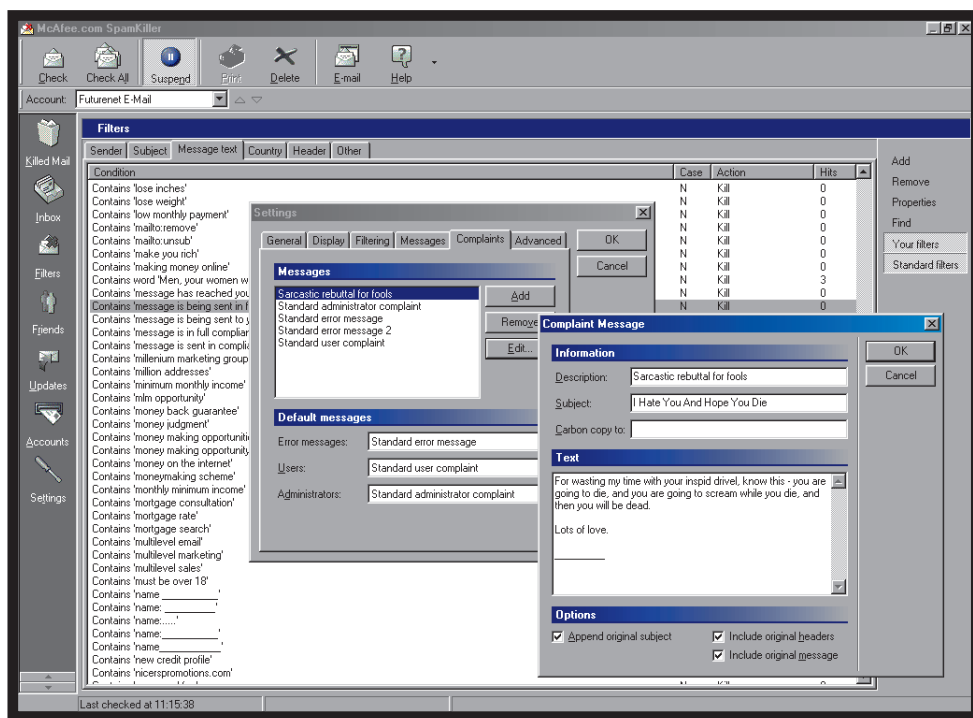
→ Deal with intrusive spam writers without having to lift a finger

Quite the contrary, following the instructions listed to do so is usually a mistake, just confirming that the account is still a valid address. To get rid of this, you have to dedicate hours to setting up mail filters to strain out certain phrases – make them too draconian, and email that you want to receive gets vapourised as well, too lenient, and you will barely make a dent. SpamKiller solves all of these problems.

A new Outlook

The only minor criticism that we have is the way that SpamKiller runs – as a separate program rather than an email client plugin. Having to run one package to filter everything, then kick open your email client proper to actually download it onto your computer is annoying, and leaving them both open simultaneously to check your box every few minutes usually sees the spam slipping the net before SpamKiller sees it. The positive side of this is that it isn't email client dependent – whether you use Outlook, Eudora, Poco or even your own custom written version, you can use it. The exceptions to this rule are closed mail services, notably AOL and web-based mail that doesn't rely on a POP3 mailbox.

Operation is, for the most part, completely transparent. The first time that you run SpamKiller, you have to enter certain details – your mail server, username and password – and import your email client's address book. This sets up your 'Friends' list – people whose email will be waved through on the nod, or with more draconian settings, the only mailers you'll receive. With this information, SpamKiller connects to your POP3 server every ten minutes, checking for mail, filtering it, and alerting you in the task bar when anything has arrived, including spam if you ask it to, shunting it into a separate 'Killed Mail' folder. When you fire up your email client, only non-killed mail remains on the server.

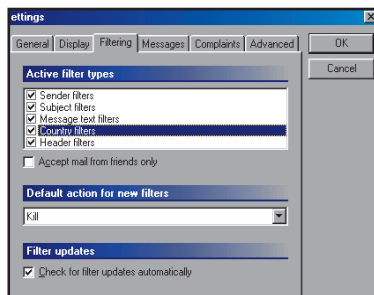


EMAIL FILTERING

McAfee SpamKiller

PRICE £26 approx (web download) SUPPLIER McAfee WWW www.mcafee.co.uk

11/10 for the first company to write a program that sends unsolicited electric shocks down the phoneline to spam artists



↑ All the SpamKiller filters can be switched on and off at will, and false positives will be saved for a few days before finally being deleted.

A massive selection of filters is built into the program to begin with, immediately gouging out most standard letters. Any mail in which the reply address doesn't match the sender or that

wasn't sent direct to you, can be either marked as suspicious or destroyed immediately. When diving into the actual email, SpamKiller can also check the senders, domain names, words/phrases in the text, run checks for whether the sender's address is mostly numbers, block access from entire countries, or kick out messages lacking the proper credentials. Setting up your own filters is a simple process, but SpamKiller is also updated with the latest keywords on a regular basis.

Filter bursting point

Better still, the filters are not restricted to simply deleting email. Each can be automated to bounce back a message of complaint to the sender, sender ISP, administrator (the addresses of whom are worked out by SpamKiller as part of the process) and a carbon copy to a separate account. Alternatively, you can fake a

'bounceback' message, hopefully persuading the spammer that your address is no longer valid. When browsing through your list of killed email and suspicious arrivals, all of these tools are on hand to be easily deployed, with you being able to keep several complaints on standby ready for every eventuality. The only limitation is that when SpamKiller auto-sends a complaint it will only do so from one generic template – you can't mix and match them according to the type of spam.

These minor details aside, SpamKiller is an exceptionally powerful way to keep your inbox clear of unwanted attention, one that we can heartily recommend.

Richard Cobbett

PCPlus Verdict

McAFEE SPAMKILLER

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ FOR → Very powerful filters → Effective operation → Regularly updated ruleset → Active tools built in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ AGAINST → Has to be run separately from email client → Intrusive animated icons |
|---|---|

Specification	9
Quality	8
Performance	9
Value for money	7
OVERALL.....	9/10

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System requirements
 Pentium, 32MB RAM, Windows 95, MAPI or POP3 e-mail account (AOL, Hotmail and so on, not supported)